

INTERVIEW WITH CATHERINE BONNETT, ORAL HISTORY PROJECT FOR SACRAMENTO AAUW

Made on March 15, 1984 by Kay Kipp

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014 Introduction

026 Catherine was born ~~in~~ born in Kentucky, March 26, 1899.

029 Her parents were Samuel and Margaret V. Biggs.

030 Father was a bookkeeper, her mother a bilingual teacher.

032 Her father moved west, superintendent in a gold-mining company in Arizona.

038 They lived in different places.

039 They eventually settled in Seattle, Washington about 1907 where father was an accountant.

043 Catherine attended several elementary schools; mother helped with her education. Mother played the piano but Catherine studied piano under another teacher.

049 In Seattle, she finished grammar school and went to two high schools in order to study Spanish. She graduated from Queen Anne High School in Spokane, 1917.

052 She took a business course in the summer and worked at different jobs.

056 There was no doubt about her going to college.

059 They lived near the University of Washington from which she graduated with a major in Fine Arts with emphasis on Interior Decoration. She took a few business courses for background study.

065 She got credential for teaching and taught business and art at Kirkland High School across the river from Seattle for four years.

073 She attended Columbia Teachers' College, majored in art. Received M.A. in 1928.

080 Worked in Bon Marche Department Store in Seattle one year.

083 Married Howbert Bonnett in Fall, 1929.

084 Husband had been an athlete and graduate at same high school as Catherine. He had taught at Lincoln and Cleveland High Schools in Seattle.

088 They moved to Sacramento where he taught business courses at Sacramento High School then at Sacramento City College until he retired in 1961.

094 In Sacramento they started their family and had two sons, Howbert William and Roger.

096 When sons graduated from high school, Catherine returned to teaching for 13 years in North Sacramento High Schools.

- 099 Catherine retired a year after her husband, happy to try new things.
- 103 They took a six-months trip around the world with another couple. They traveled in Europe, Egypt, India including Kashmir, Japan, the Hawaiian Islands.
- 114 The price was amazingly low, only \$6,000 apiece.
- 124 They are both photographers, and members of Sierra Camera Club. They have shown slides of their trips many times.
- 129 They have made many other trips, several times to Europe, across South America.
- 137 Catherine has taken her painting and knitting with her.
- 140 They have traveled also numerous times to Canada and Alaska.
- 143 Their two sons have moved around also. Howbert travels often to Alaska where he lived for awhile (now at Donner Summit), working in real estate appraisal, and other son, Roger, lives in Washington D.C., working for the Department of Forestry.
- 156 They have three grandsons.
- 160 Her average day is busy still with sewing, keeping house, painting, gardening (flowers, vegetables, berries).
- 170 AAUW Activities over the years have included 50 year membership in two book groups, attendance at garden and Spanish sections.
- 180 She was Treasurer one year and Chairman of Arts and Crafts Exhibit.
- 186 Voting. Her mother voted from 1910 when women in Washington were first allowed to vote and Catherine took it for granted that she would vote as soon as she was eligible and has voted ever since.
- 196 When asked about the Equal Rights Amendment, she said she feels women should have equal pay for equal work, but that too much "campaigning" has worked to build walls of resentment.
- 206 Her work in various jobs included bindery girl, stenographer for a school book department and for a Japanese export company, cable clerk, interior decorator, and teacher.
- 215 She has felt no discrimination, no envy of men and their work.
- 219 "I felt that it was a privilege to take part in the business world."
- 224 She had many interests, many goals.
- 226 AAUW should acquaint women with different problems and "stands," but should not take a stand and say, "This is it!"
- 233 She would like to see more women in political life, "but it takes a special kind of woman--or man."

- 238 Catherine's interests today still include sewing, cooking, freezing, canning, entertaining. She likes to work with her hands and feels that it is very important to be creative and mentally alert. These activities can help to supplement the family income, too.
- 265 Among changes which she has seen are changes in travel, the activities of young people and the escalation of prices. She tells of their first car, a Model A Ford, which they took, with the family in it, all over Mexico.
- 278 She does comparative shopping because of the "outrageous prices today."
- 281 Her advice to young women is to get as much education as possible and to try as many jobs as possible before making great decisions. A varied background will help make life more interesting and looking at different sides of a question will help with making these decisions.
- 293 - 300 Thank you!